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RAFFAELLE'S "BEAUTIFUL GARDENER."

WITHIN the last few years, the noble collection of art-treasures in the Louvre has received a valuable accession in the painting

is a representation of the Virgin with the children, Jesus and John the Baptist. Among the choice productions which adorn



THE BEAUTIFUL GARDENER.—FROM A PAINTING BY RAFFAELLE.

by Raffaele which bears the name of "La Belle Jardinière," or "The Beautiful Gardener," in the catalogue, and of which we are enabled to present our readers with an engraving. It

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the walls of the Louvre, there may be more elaborate compositions, and pictures on a larger scale; but there are certainly none more finished or more delightful to behold. Vasari

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relates, that Raffaele, after having painted "The Consignment of Christ to the Tomb," which is now in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, went to Florence, and there painted "The Beautiful Gardener," which he intended to send to M. de Sienne; but as Bramante wrote to him, stating that the pope had consented to allow him to paint the halls of the Vatican, he set off in haste for Rome, entrusting to Ridolfo Ghirlandaio the task of finishing the blue drapery of the Virgin. The picture was purchased of M. de Sienne by Francis the First; and in the time of Louis the Fourteenth it adorned the cabinet at Versailles. In the carefully prepared catalogues of the Louvre, it is valued at £16,003 sterling. Although Ridolfo Ghirlandaio painted the drapery of the Virgin, he claims no part of the honour of the work. Even on the border of this drapery may be read the signature "*Raphaello Urbinas*," which is undoubtedly traced by the hand of Ridolfo. M. Quatremère de Quincy, the able Secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts, speaks of the painting in the following terms:—

"There is the same freshness and excellent preservation in the charming picture of the Virgin which Raffaele executed for M. de Sienne, and which is called, 'The Beautiful Gardener.' Her costume, which really has something of the villager's about it, has perhaps given rise to this name. It is one of those naïve compositions which, for the due proportion in the size of the figures, may be placed at the head of those in which Raffaele, before rising to the ideal of his art, as he afterwards did, confined himself to the expression of simplicity and that modest grace, of which the manners of the country supplied him with models among the young village girls. Nothing can surpass the purity here depicted. The tone of colouring and the style of drawing are in admirable harmony; and this harmony has never produced anything more lovely than the forms of the children Jesus and John. Three circumstances prove that this picture belongs to the same period as 'The

Consignment of Christ to the Tomb.' In the first place, the date marked on it, which is 1507; then there is a drawing of it by Raffaele in the Mariette Collection, on the back of which are rough sketches of the figures belonging to the above-mentioned work; and, in the last place, it is known that Raffaele set out for Rome before finishing the blue drapery of the Virgin, which was finished by Ridolfo Ghirlandaio."

Lepicius, in his "Catalogue Raisonné" of the king's pictures, gives a remarkable explanation about this one: "As Raffaele," says he, "makes the child Jesus rest upon one foot of the Virgin, I think he intended by this trait to indicate the respectful tenderness of this holy mother, who, in her son, sees her Saviour."

As to the title by which this picture is known among artists, Lavalée has sought for its origin: with more laborious effort than was worth while. "It is possible," says he, "that the model which Raffaele employed was a gardener, remarkable for her beauty, and that hence was derived the name of the picture. But this is merely a supposition, and it appears to me more probable, that this title, which there is nothing in the painting to occasion—unless it be the flowers with which the Virgin is surrounded—arose from the capricious custom, not uncommon among picture-dealers, of fixing upon some casual circumstance as a means of distinguishing the numerous works of a great master from one another."

This painting of "The Beautiful Gardener" was engraved by Gilles Roupelet and James Chéreau. In the year 1803 M. Boucher Desnoyers established his reputation as an engraver by making a drawing and engraving from it, which he dedicated to M. Denon, the General Director of the Napoleon Museum. The plate proved also a source of great profit to the museum. It is now, and will long remain, unquestionably, the most successful rendering of this delicious painting which breathes so much purity and grace.

KAREL DUJARDIN.

THIS artist, whose name is less familiar than that of many others, was also a landscape and animal painter. Most of the Flemish artists may be described in the same way, and are yet different in their characteristics. Words are not the fittest representative of their peculiar types, but a glance at once separates Cuyp from Dujardin, Potter from Berghem. How shall we describe the peculiar style of the artist we now treat of? To succeed would be difficult.

When, reader, you take a country walk, you sometimes rest on a stile, or under a hedge, or on a fallen tree, and looking around you, various objects meet your eye—a few clustering trees, a bit of an old wall half covered by ancient ivy, a cow, an ass, a man—all homely, all trivial; and yet add all these together, and you have a picture of Dujardin, nothing more, nothing less. But nature always; and out of these simple and even arid materials he makes a landscape, exhibiting fully his style and manner.

Pilkington and Deschamps inform us that he was born in 1640. Biographers are not always consistent in their dates. In 1652 appeared some admirable engravings by Karel Dujardin, perfect masterpieces, which certainly were not executed at the youthful age of twelve. We must, therefore, place Dujardin's birth at least as far back as 1635, as it is well known that these were the productions of a very precocious talent. It is not known for certain who was his master; some call him a pupil of Berghem, some of Paul Potter. But, however this may be, he went early to Italy, and on arriving at Rome, joined the jolly club of Flemish drinkers, into which all were admitted under a nick-name, which in his case was Goat's Beard. His easy and impulsive nature, to which pleasure was a necessity, gained him many friends. His countryman, Pierre de Laer, had introduced a style among the Romans of which they were very fond, and Dujardin following it up was well supported. He painted little landscapes, with a cow, some sheep, a miller and his ass, a girl holding up her petticoats to cross a ford (p. 260); and was

well paid for them on account of their excellence. With youth, spirits, and money, Dujardin led an easy, jolly life, contracting many debts, and wasting much talent to pay them. But he studied like a true Dutchman; he saw the vulgar side of everything, and made that side picturesque. The quacks of a fair, so common in Rome, were a favourite subject. He admired their genius, he caught their pantomime, and before he returned to his *atelier*, his picture was finished in his head. The rough idlers of Transtevera, with their robust wives, filled the foreground, or, perhaps, a muleteer whistling or searching his pockets for a coin, to give the boy with a black face and a pasteboard nose, who went about collecting.

Dujardin's early style was a comical mixture of Bamboche, Jean Miel, and Michael Angelo des Batailles. The Italians were much struck by his pictures, and naturally so, for he invested the every-day scenes he painted with his own gentleness, his own gay and lively spirit. It was something between the finish so much esteemed at Amsterdam, and the ordinary satirical character of the artists of that school who lived in Rome—semi-Romans themselves.

The price which the Italians put upon the works of Karel did not suffice for his increasing expense. The same could be said of him that was said of Bamboche by the historian Passeri, *amico della recreazione e del buon tempo*. To create for himself new resources, he tried the portrait style, and succeeded well, because an artist like him could not do anything badly. He composed portraits very simply, in general without any details, half-length, with all the usual sobriety of his genius. We speak here of sobriety in the picturesque sense, for in private life he knew nothing of it. His character is marvellously well painted in the portrait which exists in the Museum of Amsterdam, where he is represented clothed in a black silk cloak, his hand upon his breast. His great intelligent and open eyes announce frankness, penetration, and jollity; his mouth is broad and somewhat sensual; but his great lips reveal a fine irony which has no bitterness in it.